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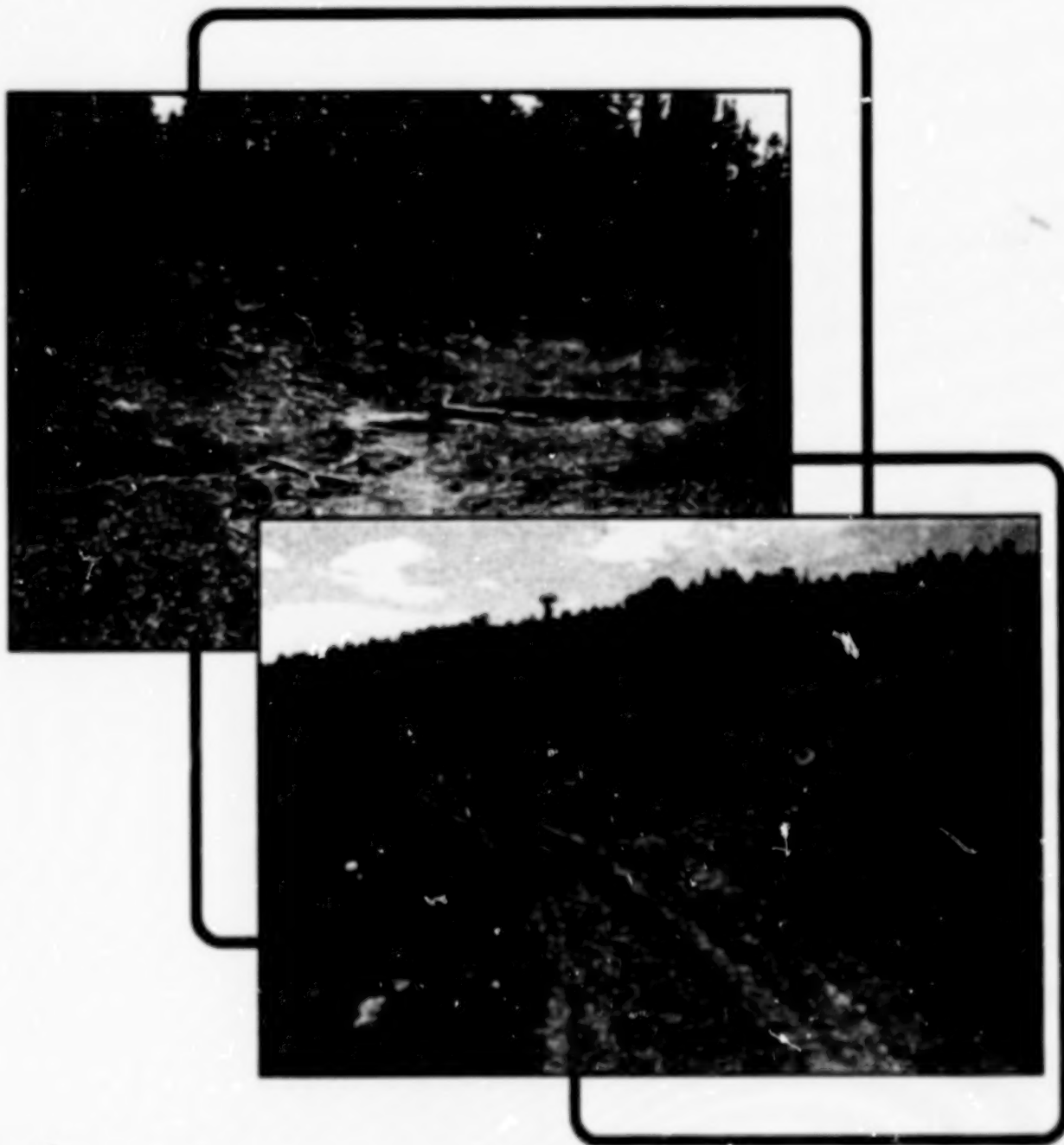
U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Rawlins District Office

Great Divide Resource Area

July 1998



Shirley Mountain Planning Review Travel Management Strategy



98-001865

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MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM/WY/PL-98/022-1610



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Rawlins Field Office
1500 North Third Street
Rawlins, Wyoming 82301-4576

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JUL 08 1998

Dear Reader:

Attached are the Shirley Mountain Planning Review Travel Management Strategy (plan), associated environmental assessment (EA), and Decision Record. Shirley Mountain is within the Bureau of Land Management, Great Divide Resource Area, and is located in Carbon County, Wyoming. The planning area is comprised of approximately 69,590 acres of mixed ownerships consisting of public, private, and state lands.

The plan and EA were developed following a recent modification of the Great Divide Resource Management Plan (RMP). The RMP review was conducted to analyze the effects of a proposed off-road vehicle (ORV) designation for BLM-administered public lands on Shirley Mountain. The decision to change the ORV designation from "limited to existing roads and trails" to "limited to designated roads and trails," became final on June 26, 1998. No protests were received on the proposed decision (WY-037-EAS-091).

The enclosed Shirley Mountain plan: 1) identifies the inventory and mapping which was completed prior to analysis and development of the plan; 2) designates which roads will remain open to vehicular travel; and, 3) describes actions necessary to implement the new ORV policy. These actions include road signing, closure and obliteration of selected roads, as well as monitoring and enforcement actions.

The enclosed EA analyzes two alternatives: the no action alternative and the proposed action, which was chosen by the BLM in the decision record. Scoping for both the plan and EA included an on-site public tour, as well as a series of public meetings in Casper, Cheyenne and Rawlins. Public comments resulting from the tour, public meetings, and newspaper articles have been considered during the development of both the plan and EA.

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed within 30 days from receipt of this decision to:

Area Manager
Bureau of Land Management
Great Divide Resource Area
P.O. Box 2407
Rawlins, WY 82301

The appeal period will end on August 7, 1998. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to regulations at 43 CFR 4.21 (58 CFR 4939, January 19, 1993) for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. A copy of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to the appropriate office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time

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the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

STANDARDS FOR OBTAINING A STAY

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards.

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted.
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

If you need additional information, please contact either Sarah Crocker, Range Management Specialist, at (307) 328-4253, or John Spehar, Planning Coordinator, at (307) 328-4264.

Sincerely,



Acting Area Manager

**SHIRLEY MOUNTAIN PLANNING REVIEW
TRAVEL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

**GREAT DIVIDE RESOURCE AREA
RAWLINS DISTRICT
RAWLINS, WYOMING**

JUNE 1998

Shirley Mountain Travel Management Strategy

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SHIRLEY MOUNTAIN PLANNING REVIEW TRAVEL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

I. INTRODUCTION

A. DEFINITIONS

The following is a selection of definitions which help clarify the meaning of the terms used in this document.

1. **"Off-Road Vehicle"** means any motorized tracked or wheeled vehicle designed for cross-country travel over any type of natural terrain. Exclusions (from Executive Order 11644, as amended by Executive Order 11989) are nonamphibious registered motorboats; any military, fire, emergency or law enforcement vehicle while being used for emergency purposes; any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the authorizing officer or otherwise officially approved; vehicles in official use; and any combat support vehicle in times of national defense emergencies.
2. **"Public Lands"** means publicly-owned lands that are administered by the Bureau of Land Management.
3. **"Limited Use Area"** means an area restricted at certain times, in certain areas, or to certain vehicular use. These restrictions may be of any type, but can generally be accommodated within the following categories: time or season of vehicle use, permitted or licensed use only, use on existing roads and trails, use on designated roads and trails, and other restrictions.

B. BACKGROUND

Shirley Mountain is located in the northeast corner of Carbon County, Wyoming, approximately 40 miles north and west of the town of Medicine Bow. The mountain includes Bureau of Land Management (BLM), state, and private lands that support a variety of uses including wood production, forage production for livestock, habitat for wildlife, recreational opportunities, and water collection/storage. In the past, the BLM has developed several activity plans for the mountain including two allotment management plans (AMP), a forest management plan (FMP), and a habitat management plan (HMP). Travel management and Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) use on the mountain is not covered in detail in any of the existing plans. The need for additional roads associated with timber sales, including how and when they will be reclaimed, is covered in the FMP. The HMP identifies several two-track roads recommended for closure due to resource concerns. The Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Great Divide Resource Area (GDRA) identifies BLM roads that are designated as prominent routes and either have the necessary public easements across private land or are considered high priority for easement acquisition. Public easements through private lands have been obtained for the Shirley Mountain Loop Road which starts at the north end of the mountain and continues across the top to the southeast end. Four other roads on the mountain are identified in the GDRA RMP as high priority for gaining legal public access, either by easement, agreement, or land exchange.

Shirley Mountain Travel Management Strategy

In 1994 the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) completed a habitat analysis for Shirley Mountain. The main emphasis of this study was to identify habitat problems that impact wildlife populations and potential solutions for those problems. The study found that the majority of hiding cover for large game animals on the mountain is heavily dissected by a system of roads and trails. Security areas for these animals during hunting season are very limited. An estimate of the average road density over the entire mountain was 1.9 miles of roads per square mile. Roads are commonly believed to adversely affect elk populations. When a 1/4-mile buffer zone was superimposed along the roads, very little habitat remained outside the influence of roads. The study recommended that future management activities restrict the construction of new roads and that a plan be developed to manage road and trail proliferation.

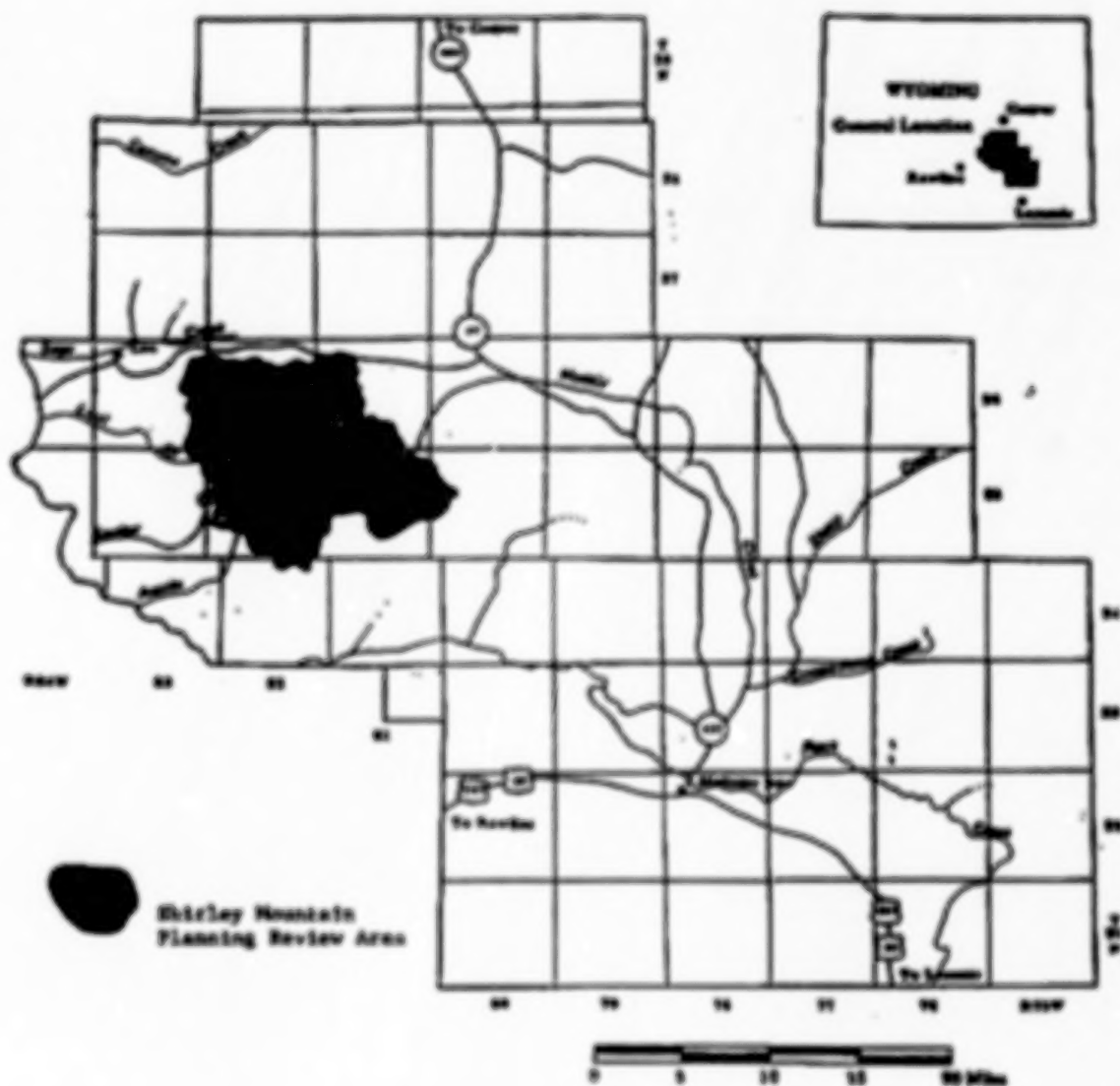
In January 1995, the WGFD asked the BLM to coordinate a meeting involving the two agencies and the private landowners on Shirley Mountain to discuss future management direction. As a result, the Shirley Mountain Technical Committee (SMTTC) was formed in February 1995. The SMTTC adopted the boundary established in the BLM's Forest Management Plan (FMP) as the area of primary concern and is currently working to develop overall goals, objectives, and actions for the Shirley Mountain ecosystem. This boundary encompasses the top of Shirley Mountain and extends to the surrounding flats where the forest canopy ends (see Map 1). Within the boundary are 44,380 acres of BLM-administered land; 4,830 acres of State land; and 20,380 acres of private land for a total of 69,590 acres.

The proliferation of roads and two-track trails within the established boundary affect the interests of everyone on the SMTTC. Identified problems associated with the road network as a whole include, dissection of hiding cover for big game; loss of security area for big game during hunting seasons; and loss of areas lacking roads and trails where hunting can occur without disturbance from motorized vehicles. Identified problems associated with specific roads or trails include, erosion of soils into waterways; loss of forage for both livestock and wildlife (especially in wet meadow areas); and the headcutting and downcutting of stream channels due to the creation of nick points. Stream channel morphology changes and excess sedimentation into the headwaters of creeks are causing the degradation of fisheries habitat.

The SMTTC decided that travel management for off-road vehicles would be its first priority. Maps of the known roads and trails were taken from the FMP and used to help identify those roads necessary to the daily operations of the private landowners, recreationists, and BLM and WGFD personnel. The committee established criteria for keeping specific roads open. Questions asked when deciding whether a road should be left opened included:

- Does this road have any soil erosion associated with it (deep ruts, rills, gullies)?
- Can the erosion be easily mitigated?
- Is this road located in a potential big game security area?
- Is this road the best choice to leave open when there are several roads leading to the same place?

The ORV designation in the GORA RMP, as amended, establishes Shirley Mountain as an area where motorized vehicle travel is "limited to designated roads and trails." The objective of this plan is to formally designate which roads and trails will be open for vehicular travel.



MAP # 1 - GENERAL LOCATION

Shirley Mountain Travel Management Strategy

In order to obtain public input, the Committee conducted a tour in September 1996. In November 1996, the Committee conducted a series of public meetings in Casper, Cheyenne, and Rawlins. The background leading up to these meetings and the criteria used to determine whether a road should be opened or closed were explained. The BLM received a wide variety of public comments, both for and against this proposal. These comments are available for public review at the BLM office in Rawlins. Based upon the SMTTC and other public recommendations, the BLM developed a map of the proposed road system for Shirley Mountain (see Map 2).

II. PREDESIGNATION ACTIONS

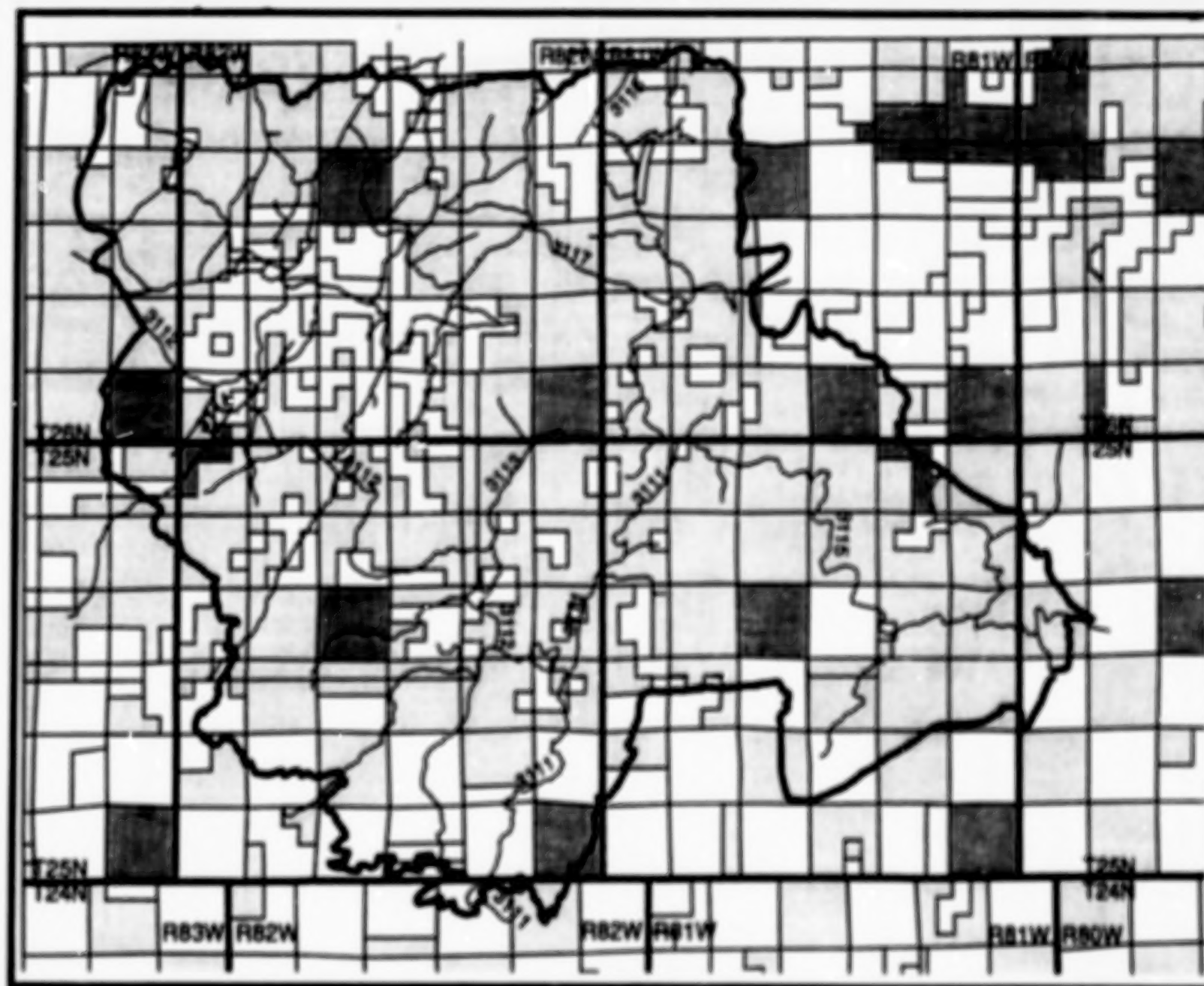
Actions in this section occurred prior to the Shirley Mountain travel management planning review.

A. INVENTORY OF ROADS AND TRAILS

The BLM developed a detailed map of roads and trails on Shirley Mountain using Geographical Information System (GIS) data during the preparation of the forest management plan in 1992-1994. This map was produced by tracing visible roads and trails from aerial photographs onto clear mylar and digitizing these lines for GIS use. Many trails on the mountain are under forest canopy, and some are not identifiable on aerial photography. At the time of the FMP's preparation, the most current aerial photos for the Shirley Mountain area were taken in 1985. For these reasons, the BLM determined that a more complete map of roads and trails on Shirley Mountain was needed. An inventory initiated in the summer of 1996, using Global Positioning System technology, was completed in the fall of 1997. The mountain was divided into five separate units for the inventory and each unit was assigned to either BLM or WGFD personnel for data collection. To date, all of the roads and trails that have been inventoried have been recorded with GPS units and have been mapped in GIS (see Map 3).

B. ACCESS NEEDS

During the scoping period, one recurring comment from the public was that legal public access on main transportation routes needed to be acquired. It was felt by the public that this would help ensure ample access to the various blocks of public lands on the mountain. There are seven roads identified in the GDR's RMP as transportation routes on Shirley Mountain: Saylor Creek Road #3110, Dolling Creek Road #3111, Bear Park Road #3112, Button Meadows Road #3113, Lost Creek Road #3114, Shirley Mountain Loop Road #3115 (easements acquired), and Cave Creek Road #3117. Various options will be pursued to ensure public access to blocks of BLM land on Shirley Mountain. The most obvious option is for the BLM to acquire easements through private lands along these routes. Another option involves a potential land exchange. This plan establishes these private tracts as high priority for acquisition. A third alternative, to be pursued if the first two options are not successful, is to reroute existing transportation routes off the private land and onto surrounding public land. In areas where an existing transportation route passes through a wet meadow or riparian area, rerouting could benefit both the resource and the public. The BLM explored all of the access needs identified in the public scoping meetings on a case-by-case basis.

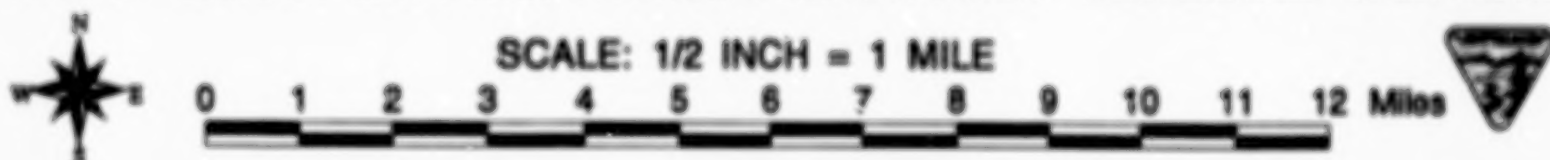


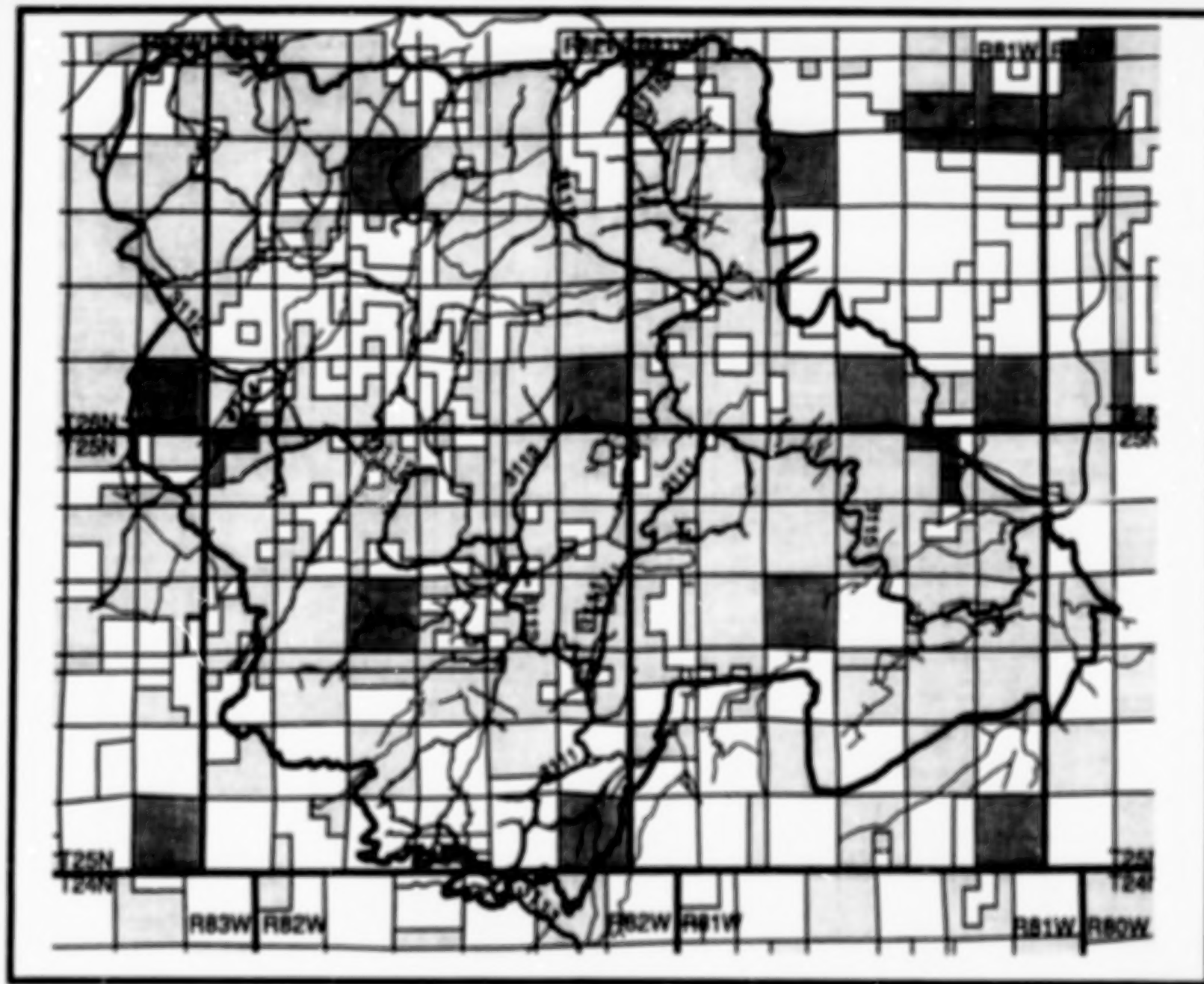
- LEGEND**
- FEDERAL LAND
 - STATE LAND
 - PRIVATE LAND
 - FOREST MANAGEMENT BOUNDARY
 - MAIN TRANSPORTATION ROADS (NUMBERED ROADS)
 - OTHER DESIGNATED OPEN ROADS

FOOTNOTE -
 DESIGNATED OPEN ROADS APPLY TO PUBLIC LANDS ONLY. LANDOWNER PERMISSION IS REQUIRED TO LEGALLY CROSS PRIVATE LAND WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE SHIRLEY MTN. LOOP ROAD (BLM ROAD #3118)

NO WARRANTY IS MADE BY THE BLM AS TO THE ACCURACY, RELIABILITY, OR COMPLETENESS OF DATA FOR INDIVIDUAL USE OR AGAINST USE WITH OTHER DATA.

MAP 2 - SHIRLEY MOUNTAIN PLANNING REVIEW AREA - DESIGNATED OPEN ROADS





- LEGEND**
- ☐ FEDERAL LAND
 - ☒ STATE LAND
 - ☐ PRIVATE LAND
 - ☒ FOREST MANAGEMENT BOUNDARY
 - ☒ ROADS AND TRAILS
 - ☒ MAIN TRANSPORTATION ROUTES/NUMBERED ROADS



NO WARRANTY IS MADE BY THE BLM AS TO THE ACCURACY, RELIABILITY, OR COMPLETENESS OF DATA FOR INDIVIDUAL USE OR AGAINST USE WITH OTHER DATA.

MAP 3 - SHIRLEY MOUNTAIN PLANNING REVIEW AREA - TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

SCALE: 1/2 INCH = 1 MILE



Shirley Mountain Travel Management Strategy

III. POST DESIGNATION ACTIONS

Actions within this section of the plan allow for periodic review of the designated road system and for future addition, deletion, and/or rerouting of roads by the authorized officer. Adjustments to the geographical boundary of the plan area may also be necessary.

A. WHITE ARROWS ON OPEN ROADS (MAP 2)

Familiarizing the public with changes in the management of motorized travel for the Shirley Mountain area will be very important for the successful implementation of a designated road system. Understanding the damage done by creating new roads and the benefits gained by closing unneeded roads, will help the public accept motorized travel restrictions. One of the best ways to reach Shirley Mountain users is through informational signs and maps. Signs and brochure/map boxes will be located at each entrance to the Shirley Mountain Loop Road.

Informational signs will state that vehicular travel on Shirley Mountain is "limited to designated roads and trails" as indicated by the white arrow symbol. A white arrow will be placed on carsonite posts at the entrances to all roads and trails which have been designated for vehicular use.

Educational signs will be placed at roadside pullouts where travelers can acquire a map of the area. These signs will have photographs showing examples of roads that have accelerated erosion problems. A brochure available at the pullouts will include a map of the Shirley Mountain area, the boundary where the new restrictions apply, and the roads designated for use. It will also describe the white arrow program in more detail. "Tread Lightly" suggestions will be listed.

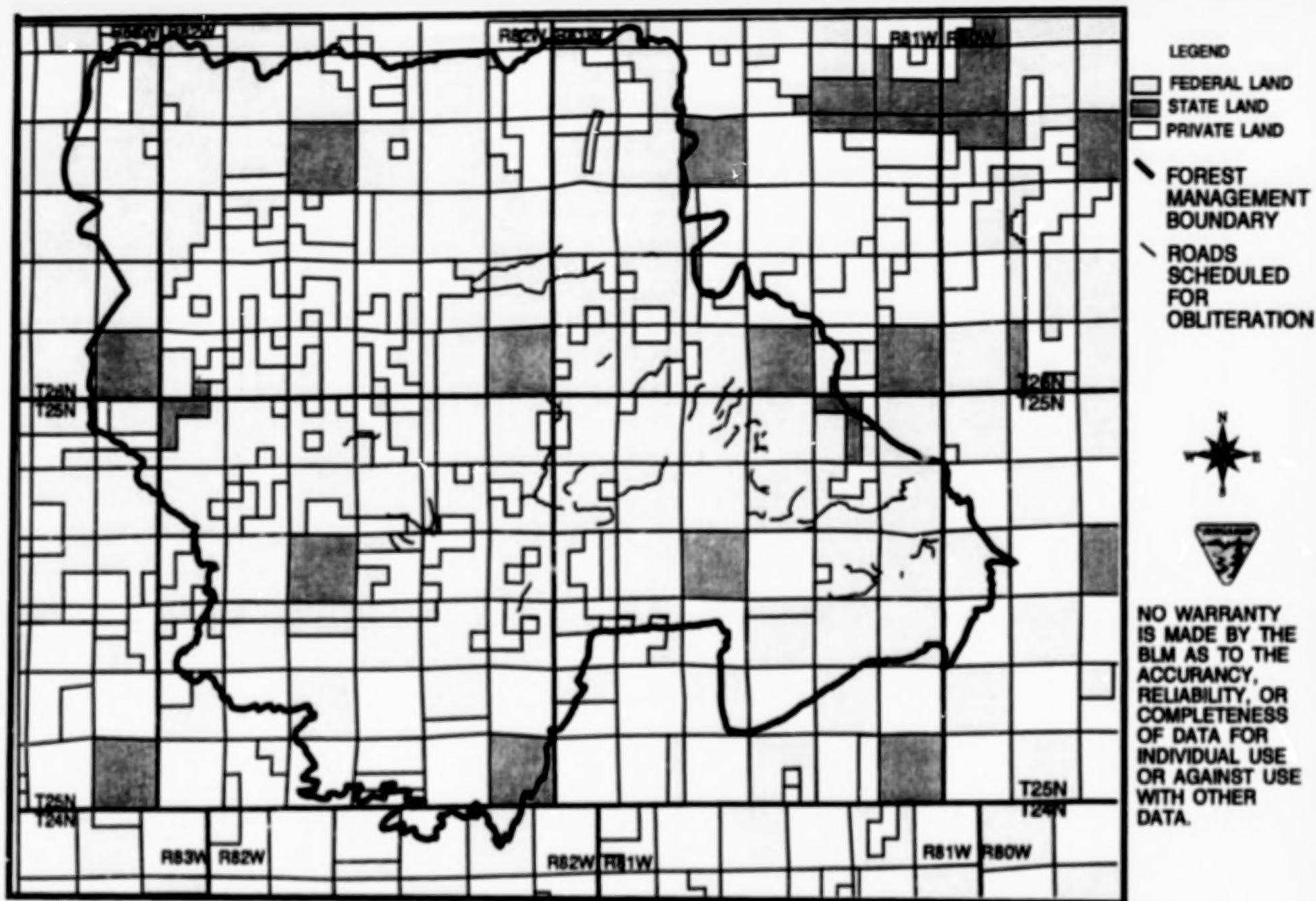
To help inform the public of changes in travel designations for Shirley Mountain, public announcements will be published in area newspapers including the Casper Star Tribune, the Laramie Daily Boomerang, the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, and the Rawlins Daily Times. Publication of these announcements will be done prior to any signing or road work on the ground. These notices will explain new travel designations and the reasons for them, how the designated roads will be marked, the boundaries for the new designations, and when the designations will take effect.

B. ROAD CLOSURES

Obliteration will involve the ripping and pitting of a roadbed and the placement of natural barriers using a track-hoe. Reseeding with native grass species will occur before snowfall in the same year as the obliteration work. The surface of these roadbeds, after reclamation, will be very rough and impassable to motorized vehicles. Photo points will be established and before and after pictures will be taken. The estimated cost of road obliteration is from \$1,000/mile for trails to \$1,500/mile for a bladed road. Roads currently scheduled for obliteration are shown on Map 4.

Other options for rehabilitating roads may include signs and/or the placement of dirt berms or physical barricades at road entrances. This option will be used on trails not scheduled for obliteration.

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Shirley Mountain Travel Management Strategy

C. ENFORCEMENT

Currently there is one District Law Enforcement Ranger responsible for law enforcement over approximately 6.9 million acres of public land within the Rawlins District. The majority of any patrolling work is done in high-priority areas during high-use periods. This presents a problem when determining how a "limited use area" will be enforced. The BLM will try to overcome these limitations with the following methods.

1. Increase the law enforcement presence on the mountain for several years, during peak use periods. A request for additional law enforcement personnel will be submitted to the BLM State Office. Per diem costs for extra law enforcement personnel will be budgeted in advance.
2. Both BLM and WGFD field personnel will be responsible for reporting off-road travel violations to the BLM District Ranger. Similar reports may also be received from the general public. The BLM Ranger will investigate all reported violations.
3. During the public scoping period, several organizations showed an interest in organizing an "Adopt-a-Road Program." A program of this nature could involve various families, groups and/or organizations being assigned clusters of roads to monitor for ORV violations. These volunteers will only be responsible for reporting unauthorized ORV use to the BLM District Ranger. Such a program will be considered if and when BLM receives specific offers for assistance.

D. MONITORING

Upon identifying unauthorized roads or trails, BLM resource specialists and operations personnel will complete a referral notice. This form will also be made available for use by WGFD personnel, private landowners, and the general public. The information from these notices will help BLM identify problem areas so they can be addressed in a timely manner.

E. MAINTENANCE

Maintenance will be completed on a regular basis on designated roads for which BLM has jurisdictional responsibility.

F. TEMPORARY ROADS

In addition to designated roads and trails, the authorized officer may approve short term, temporary roads to be constructed for the purpose of resource management/use. Such roads will be associated with fire control activities, forest management contracts, formal rights-of-ways, and similar resource management/use activities. Except for fire control activities, authorization for the construction of such temporary roads shall specify design criteria, maintenance responsibilities, seasonal restrictions, closure dates, and methods of closure, as deemed appropriate by the authorized officer.

Shirley Mountain Travel Management Strategy

G. EXEMPTIONS

As identified in the Great Divide Resource Management Plan, as amended, off-road travel is permitted to accomplish necessary tasks and only if such travel does not result in resource damage.

Necessary tasks are defined as work requiring the use of a motor vehicle including: 1) retrieval of dead and down big game animals during hunting season; 2) construction and maintenance of approved range improvements on public lands; 3) retrieval of sick or injured livestock; 4) distribution of salt and mineral blocks for livestock use; 5) mineral activities as described in 43 CFR 3809.1-3; and 6) official vehicles when directly in support of range and forest fire control efforts, rescue operations, and similar emergency uses.

Resource damage is defined as: 1) driving into or across riparian areas, springs, or seeps during times of high runoff or soil saturation; 2) cutting standing dead or live trees or shrubs to gain access into an area; and 3) cutting, damaging, or destroying fences or other improvements. Resource damage occurring as a result of off-road vehicular use for "necessary tasks" may result in additional restrictions or prohibitions. These restrictions and/or prohibitions may be immediately implemented by the authorized officer without the need for a plan amendment.

Public lands in the Shirley Mountain planning review area will remain open to off-road use by motorized, tracked over-the-snow vehicles, provided that they do not adversely affect soils, wildlife, vegetation, or improvements.



END

11-13-98